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ABSTRACT

Major demographic trends and consequences for higher education are examined. The Baby Boom sharply increased birth rates from 1946 to 1964 and was followed by a decline in births that lasted from 1964 to 1978. Currently there is an increased birth rate, but of much smaller size than the Baby Boom rates, due largely to the smaller size of the family, new occupational opportunities for women, and new patterns of living singly. A decline in the number of high school graduates will last until 1998. The birth rate decline was primarily a white and middle-class phenomenon, while the birth rates for minorities stayed even. Regional differences will increase during the decade. Some Sun Belt states are encountering major increases in the number of elementary school children, while Frost Belt states do not show such an increase, and will not for some years. This trend suggests that by the end of the decade, higher education in the Sun Belt will expand, while Frost Belt states will continue to constrict their higher education enrollments. The demographic changes suggest that higher education should provide new programs in order to attract minorities and older adults, and programs offered in conjunction with industry and the military. (SW)

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Executive Summary

Harold L. Hodgkinson
July 28, 1982

: "TERRAIN PAPER" ON DEMOGRAPHY AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Institutions of higher education will have to plan for a decline in the size of the cohort graduating from high school. This decline will last until 1998. It is caused by the decline in births following the Baby Boom years. The Baby Boom sharply increased birth rates from 1946 to 1964; it is followed by a slump in births that lasted from 1964 to 1978. We are currently seeing an increasing birth rate, but of much smaller size than the Baby Boom rates, due largely to the smaller size of the family, new occupational opportunities for women, and new patterns of living singly.

Differential fertility means that not all families have the same number of children. The birth rate decline was primarily a white and middle-class phenomenon, while a proportionate increase of minority births, and children raised by single-parent families and multiple-earner families suggest that more of these youth will be unprepared for college during the decade. Blacks and women are now proportionately represented among college populations, while Hispanics are not, and will form a growth group in higher education.

Regional differences will increase during the decade. Some Sun Belt states are already encountering major increases in the number of elementary school children, teacher shortages, need for new school construction, etc., while Frost Belt states do now show such an increase, and will not for some years. This trend suggests that by the end of the decade, higher education in the Sun Belt will expand, while Frost Belt states will continue to constrict their higher education enrollments.

As a consequence, state and regional policymaking authority will increase during the decade. Higher education will have to get used to a smaller contingent of white, middle-class students from suburban backgrounds in their entering classes, and will have to provide new programs in order to attract minorities, older adults, and programs offered in conjunction with industry, the military, and other users of educational services.

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July 28, 1982

"TERRAIN PAPER" ON DEMOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTION

Every society is constructed on a foundation of demographic assumptions. When these assumptions shift, as they do from time to time, the result is a major shock felt throughout the foundation and throughout the society in total. No part of the social system is immune to these shocks.

However, because demographic changes, especially changes in the size and nature of the birth cohort, take many years to run their course through the age spectrum, it is possible to have early warning systems built up to help us minimize the effects of demographic shocks. Unlike business, with their powerful environmental scanning systems and processes, the higher education structure has been weak in planning for future generations of college students, even though the data has been experienced by elementary school leaders and then secondary schools. Demographic knowledge is essential if higher education is to become less reactive and more productive in the future.

The plan of this paper will be to look briefly at some of the major demographic findings, then look at some of the consequences for higher education.

I. THE BABY BOOM AND AFTERMATH

During the years 1946 - 1964, birth rates in all parts of the United States turned upward at a very high rate. (European nations had a marked increase in births after World War II as well, but theirs lasted only about three to four years. Why ours lasted 18 years is still a mystery.) After 1964, birth rates fell almost as fast as they had risen. By 1979/80, births were beginning to move upward again, but not in the same even manner everywhere in the country.

In 1982, we are looking, not at an increase or decrease alone, but at a wave. At the crest of the wave is the Baby Boom generation, now in its 40s. (During the 1980s, the 35 to 44 age group increases in size by 42%.) After the wave crest comes a trough of population decline reaching from those in the early 20s down to about age 5. At the back of the trough, a new crest is beginning to form, composed of the Baby Boom's children -- this "echo" of the original Baby Boom cohort is very much smaller due to the large number of women who have either had no children or who have cut down on family size, who have a larger number of career options today, etc.

The Baby Boom has sequentially put exhorbitant demands on every age level it moves through, like a mouse in a snake. The expansion came first with hospital maternity wards, then expansion of Levittown-like suburbs, then elementary schools, then secondary schools, then colleges, then entry-

level jobs in the work force, etc. As the mouse moved on by, demand for services at each age level declined rapidly, starting with maternity wards, then a rash of elementary school closings, then secondary schools, and perhaps colleges in the 1980s. Certainly in the 1980s there will be far fewer youth to fill entry positions in the work place. Thus, with no federal policy needed, unemployment will probably decline (unemployed youth make up a large number of cases), violent crime will be reduced (most violent crimes are committed by young people -- many cities are already reporting decreases), a volunteer army becomes unlikely by the end of the decade, and youth-oriented businesses like the fast-food industry, newspaper delivery services, etc., have to make other arrangements.

At the other end of the snake, a much smaller mouse can now be seen -- in many parts of the country, kindergarten and elementary schools are facing major teacher shortages, new schools are needed, and youth-oriented consumption patterns (toys, baby foods, cereals) are on the increase. In about 1998, this cohort will become the first group of high school graduates of increased size since the Baby Boom.

Some communities are dealing with the crest-trough-crest pattern by establishing community holding companies, designed to hold onto public school buildings during their years of declining need, or transferring the buildings to other purposes until youth populations begin to increase again among elementary school children.

For higher education, we can look forward to a general decrease in the size of high school graduating classes for 16 years, followed by increased numbers of high school graduates beginning in 1998. However, the analysis is complicated by several other factors which make it more difficult to predict increased college enrollments after 1998.

II. DIFFERENTIAL FERTILITY

A key problem in predicting college enrollments has to do with the fact that population changes are not carried evenly by all parts of our population. The major decline in births after the Bbay Boom was almost completely a Caucasian (and probably Middle Class) phenomenon. Birth rates for minorities stayed even during those years, resulting in an increased percentage of births coming from minorities, while white and middle class births were a smaller percentage of the birth cohort. Today, the number of Native Americans, Hispanics, Orientals, Mormons, and Seventh Day Adventists are all increasing rapidly, because of either ethnic or religious values regarding family size, use of birth control, divorce, etc.

By 1990, minorities of all ages will constitute between 20% to 25% of our total population, while their percentage among youth cohorts will be about 30%. In some states, particularly Texas and Florida, minorities may approach 45% of the state birth cohort. It is difficult to deliberately avoid the educational needs of 45% of a state's youth. In addition, the

secure retirement of today's 45-year-old white worker will be increasingly dependent upon the economy's ability to generate jobs for a higher percentage of minorities among today's youth.

Differential fertility is also a regional issue in the U.S. Both total births and birth rates (per thousand eligible females) are up in the Sun Belt and holding even or still declining in most of the Frost Belt. Thus, for the first time, we are faced with a "two nation" perspective on educational policy -- trying to get more educational facilities and services for youth in the Sun Belt, and continued cutting back on these same services in the Frost Belt. It is hard to imagine now a single federal policy on educational assistance can be equitable in both "nations." In about a decade, the number of high school graduates will increase in many Sun Belt states. (Some, like Texas, are increasing already due to in-migration.) However the percentage of minorities among these graduates will be very high, particularly for Hispanic youth. Hispanics represent the largest sector of those homes in which a language other than English is spoken -- 36% of Miami's homes and 40% of San Antonio's homes. However, among 5 to 17 year olds, of Hispanic descent, 65% speak Spanish, but all but 16% speak English. Youth populations of Hispanics are much more multilingual than adult Hispanics. This is an optimistic notion as far as potential college attendance is concerned, in that English is the language of discourse in all but three of America's 3,000 colleges and universities.

The effects of differential fertility by class, ethnicity, and region are key indicators of higher education's drawing power in the next two decades. In that the swing to the Sun Belt is expected to continue (by 1990 19% of Americans will live in the West and 31% in the South), we can expect that institutions of higher education located in Sun Belt states will begin to show gains in undergraduate student populations in a few years, while the Frost Belt institutions can look forward to at least a decade of decline in enrollments. It will obviously be very difficult to present the "needs" of higher education to the U.S. Congress by 1990, due to the contrariness of regions.

Additional factors are at work. The declining proportion of youth in large segments of America during the decade may mean that many able youth will be able to move directly from high school to a good paying job, either bypassing college entirely (and getting a good education at the college level from their employer who will increasingly be providing these services) or deferring college for a few years. At the present time, over 20% of new college enrollees have not come directly from high school -- "stopping out" seems to be acceptable and even desirable.

In the past, women of all races have been underrepresented in college enrollments. Today, 52% of undergraduate enrollments are female. Access to graduate education for women has also increased dramatically, particularly in law and medicine. (These increases have produced proportional

decreases in the numbers of women who enter schools of teacher education, once the major stepping-stone for women into professional work.) Women have entered middle management positions in many occupations with great frequency in the last decade, and that trend will almost certainly continue. However, neither bank presidents nor superintendents of schools are more than 3% female at the present time. Pressures from the middle of management levels, however, will increase for promotion of female chief executives in the next decade. With such role models, many more women will be encouraged to enter professional schools. This will probably also be true of Blacks, particularly males. However, Hispanics have not yet increased their numbers of college enrollments to the same extent. Twenty-eight percent of all Black youth age 18 - 24 enter college, 46% of all female youth, but the percentage of Hispanic youth who enter college is much lower. Estimates vary from 5% to 15% of Hispanic youth who enter college.

It is important to look at the chances for graduation of various groups. Here the data is less clear, due to mobility from college to college, etc. It does appear that minorities have a higher attrition level than whites, but minorities are very often underprepared for college. Comparison of "high risk" groups of whites and minorities suggest similar levels of attrition. However, minority females in graduate programs -- presumably highly selected -- often show higher attritition levels than minority males or whites.

Regardless of attrition, any surge of new enrollments during the next two decades in higher education will be led by minorities, particularly Hispanics. It is known that there are enormous differences in lifestyle and values within the group, when one looks at Cubans (mostly East Coast, especially Florida), Puerto Ricans (New York), Tex-Mex Chicanos (San Antonio to Houston), the California Chicano, and others. Each of these subgroups will wish to retain its own identity and values, thus a single "Hispanic Strategy" for higher education would not seem wise. The issues seem basically to be worked out at state and regional levels, although their national implications are great indeed.

III. THE REVOLUTION IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION: THE BABY BOOM AS LIFELONG LEARNERS

Today, about 12 million people attend colleges and universities in the U.S. However, another 46 million adults are being educated by another service provider. These providers range from union educational colleges to the Management Academy of United Way, about 400 corporations that offer their own instructional programs to their employees, and the Graduate School of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which along educates some 12 million adults, about as many as are educated in all colleges and universities combined. AT&T spends $1.7 Billion on its own education and training programs. According to the College Board, about 50% of all American adults are taking some form of organized instruction, but only a small minority of the total

is learning in a college or university setting. If one quarter of these 46 million adults now being educated had decided to take their education programs at a college or university, there would be no decline in enrollments in higher education. However, the pressure for further education has basically gone around colleges and universities -- we have now built a "second system" of postsecondary education in the U.S. whose total investment per year is about what is invested in colleges and universities put together -- about $50 Billion.

Colleges and universities have benefited from the rapid growth of continuing education programs, both credit and non-credit, now prescribed in many states for professional development in many fields. In that adults have families and jobs, the normal logistics of college courses have been altered -- weekend colleges, evening courses, degree programs that require one Friday through Sunday package each month, etc. Whether or not content has been altered to meet the needs of the adult learner is not as easily addressed. In many cases, instruction is carried on as if the adults were normal post-pubescent adolescents, while the average age in the class may be 40, and the level of sophistication very high. It seems that whatever else the Baby Boom group did, it represents a very solid commitment to further education, but not necessarily a commitment to higher education as the institution whereby this new form of education may occur.

The Baby Boom has turned out to be a very innovative group, in terms of how they got into the job market, the patterns of living together they

have pioneered, and the myriad of routes through which they learn. As a result of their persistence, the market for postsecondary education has become very disaggregated -- there are a great many organizations that are providing educational services to adults, and because there are so many young adults (35-44), the diversification can be even greater. Because of the size of the Baby Boom, and because of their interest in learning rather than having all learning occur in one place, the further reduction in the influence of colleges and universities on this new "growth industry" seems certain. Five corporate education programs now offer their own degrees, and more are sure to follow. If higher education institutions want to become more active in the adult education area, they will have to modify their existing practices considerably. (In addition, they have to keep on watching the demography -- if new adult programs are made ready by 1990, they may begin to catch the decline of the young adult population as the mouse passes on through the snake.)

Certainly, the adult Baby Boomers have entered colleges and universities, but their participation has not been even by institutional type. Community colleges (which now enroll about half of all college and university enrollments) have clearly gone out of their way to meet the educational needs of adults, while prestigious liberal arts colleges, basically residential in nature, have not added large numbers of adults to their undergraduate student body. In many community colleges today, the average age of the students is 36 and climbing. More and more graduate degree programs are being tailored

to the needs of adults, but these efforts seem to be more concerned with the logistics and cosmetics than with the presentation and complexity of the content.

IV. SOME OTHER POPULATION-RELATED ISSUES

In 1950, the typical American family unit consisted of a working father, a housewife mother, and two or more school-age children. That pattern which fit over 65% of the households in American in 1950, now fits about 17%. We are still overwhelmingly a nation of married people, but the stay-at-home wife and the two or more school-age children are no longer with us. As the birth rates increase in this decade, the number of working women will also increase, thus drastically increasing the need for day care facilities in the U.S. Multiple earner families have become the dominant mode in America, producing a generation of "latchkey" children who are basically unattended by their families from the time they let themselves into the house with their own key in the afternoon until parents return from work in the evening.

The number of children reared in single-parent families has risen in spectacular fashion in the last decade. In 1980, the Census reported that of those children being born in 1980, 48% of them would be basically raised by a single parent. This is particularly important because of the new research that has established that children from single-parent families

have a great deal of difficulty learning in schools -- they are far more often discipline problems than are children with two parents living at home, and their level of school achievement is considerably lower than two-parent children. Thus there is good reason to believe that a large segment of the current early elementary school class of the 1980s will be unable or unwilling to consider college when they are 18.

Although the Sun Belt still has a strong appeal as a place to move to, there are underlying signs of pathology in those areas which will alter the dynamics of higher education quite considerably. There is a new kind of poverty in the Sun Belt -- in Phoenix, the poverty area is almost 15 square miles. This happened because of the city's solution to the problem of increasing numbers of residents -- don't increase the density of people per mile, just move the city limits out. As a result, there is a large area in the core of the city in which there are almost no services, no infrastructure, yet a large number of the city's poor live here. Houston is another city which has chosen to mortgage its future by not plowing current revenues back into the city in the form of improved infrastructure -- better freeways, mass transportation, social services, etc. It may be that in many of the most rapidly expanding Sun Belt cities, in which the number of college-eligible youth will increase in the near future, there will have to be generated massive and new sources of revenue for student financial assistance.

In addition to the major expansion of the 35- to 44-year-old group at present, we are also encountering a rapid growth of the number of those over 65, of whom there will be 30 million by 1990. Those over 75 will also begin to increase dramatically -- 12 million by 1990. We have given little sustained attention to the educational needs of this rapidly increasing group (and remember that the Baby Boom arrives at this place in the snake by about the year 2000). As we think through educational initiatives for this age level, we might ponder whether or not a U.S. citizen, retired and living on a pension, has any rights to student financial assistance if he/she wishes to take courses or enroll for a degree. The normal arguments for investing in human resource development (access to the world of work, increasing productivity, etc.) do not apply, yet the person's educational needs may be very real and important. We also know that our elderly population will continue to improve in general health and vitality and will want to play a significant role in American life. Their numbers will be formidable in a political sense, and they vote in very large numbers. Education may well become one of the major issues on their agenda in the next two decades.

IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A number of trends have been mentioned in this paper which will have important implications for higher education. These include:

-- During the decade, the U.S. overall population will show modest

growth (242 million people by the year 1990), while the number of youth under age 20 will fall below 30% of the population for the first time in our history.

-- At the tail end of this long decline, we can see that national birth rates are up since about 1979, producing an "echo" to the Baby Boom.

-- Colleges and universities need to prepare for a general decline in high school graduates until 1998. However, Sun Belt and Frost Belt situations are in conflict, with increases in high school graduates coming early to Sun Belt states, and much later to the Frost Belt. Regional differences will continue to increase.

-- A much higher percentage of the diminished youth cohort of the decade will be from minority backgrounds, from single parent families, multiple earner families, and others who may have a difficult time getting prepared for college.

-- A whole new array of service providers -- industry, the military, government, and voluntary agencies -- is educating three out of four adults being educated in the U.S., while colleges and universities are educating about one in four.

-- A rapid expansion in the numbers of those over 65 may force us to develop a stance regarding their educational rights (both access and assistance).

-- Women and Blacks have moved rapidly into better access to higher education, while Hispanics will show the most growth in the 1980s.

-- A spectacular increase in the 35- to 44-year-old age group will mark the economic developments of the 1980s, and gives cautious optimism for slow but consistent economic growth over the decade.

CONCLUSIONS:

Because of intensifying differences in the U.S. by region, one can expect that far more educational decision-making will take place at the state and regional levels during the next decade or perhaps two. Those colleges and universities that have trimmed their sails during the 1970s through better management of human, fiscal and physical resources, should be in a good position to survive with signifcance in the 1980s if they are realistic about the nature of the student cohorts that will be available to them. The more specific the "feeder" system, the better for the institution. (With the current high Mormon birthrate, Brigham Young University has no worries about having enough students.) The most vulnerable institutions will be liberal arts colleges and small universities that have relied on attracting a white, middle class, suburban student body -- there will simply not be enough of these students to go around. Increasing supplies of minority students and those in the 35-44 age range form two useful markets for institutions of higher education. In addition, collaboration with industry, the military, and other users of educational services can bring new programs to higher education. And the needs for new kinds of educational services among the over-65 age group should provide some stimulating new challenges in curriculum and faculty development for some institutions.

Many institutions that hired faculty in a small "age lump" during the sixties will find this same "age lump" retiring in a very short time frame. Some institutions will lose 50% of their faculty in a single five-year period. Early retirements and buy-outs may level this trend off somewhat. Maintaining good faculty morale during the 1980s will be difficult, but better management techniques should make it possible.

The 50 most selective institutions in the country will not need to worry about their selectivity -- it may even increase in some institutions. But the ability of admitted students to pay their tuition bills may constitute a new worry for these and all other institutions. (Wesleyan was perhaps just being more honest than some when it admitted that ability to pay will be a factor in the admissions decisions of that institution.)

During the 1970s, it was easy for higher education institutions to ignore the growing needs of adults -- as a result, new programs were developed that flowed around colleges and universities. During the 1980s, it will be <u>impossible</u> for higher education to ignore the declines in their "normal" 18- to 24-year-old age group. But given the increasing variation in the various regions of the U.S., the problem of getting higher education's "act together" for the Congress and Executive Branch will be a formidable problem for the end of the decade. Alice and the looking glass may be an accurate metaphor for the condition of higher education.

Finally, it is hoped that in times of demographic downturn, colleges and universities will not resort to cut-throat techniqes designed to do each other in. Recruiting practices are already undergoing major changes, not all of them healthy. Genuine concerns for institutional self-sufficiency should be balanced by the idealism that will be needed to serve the educational needs of the students we have, not the students we wish we had.